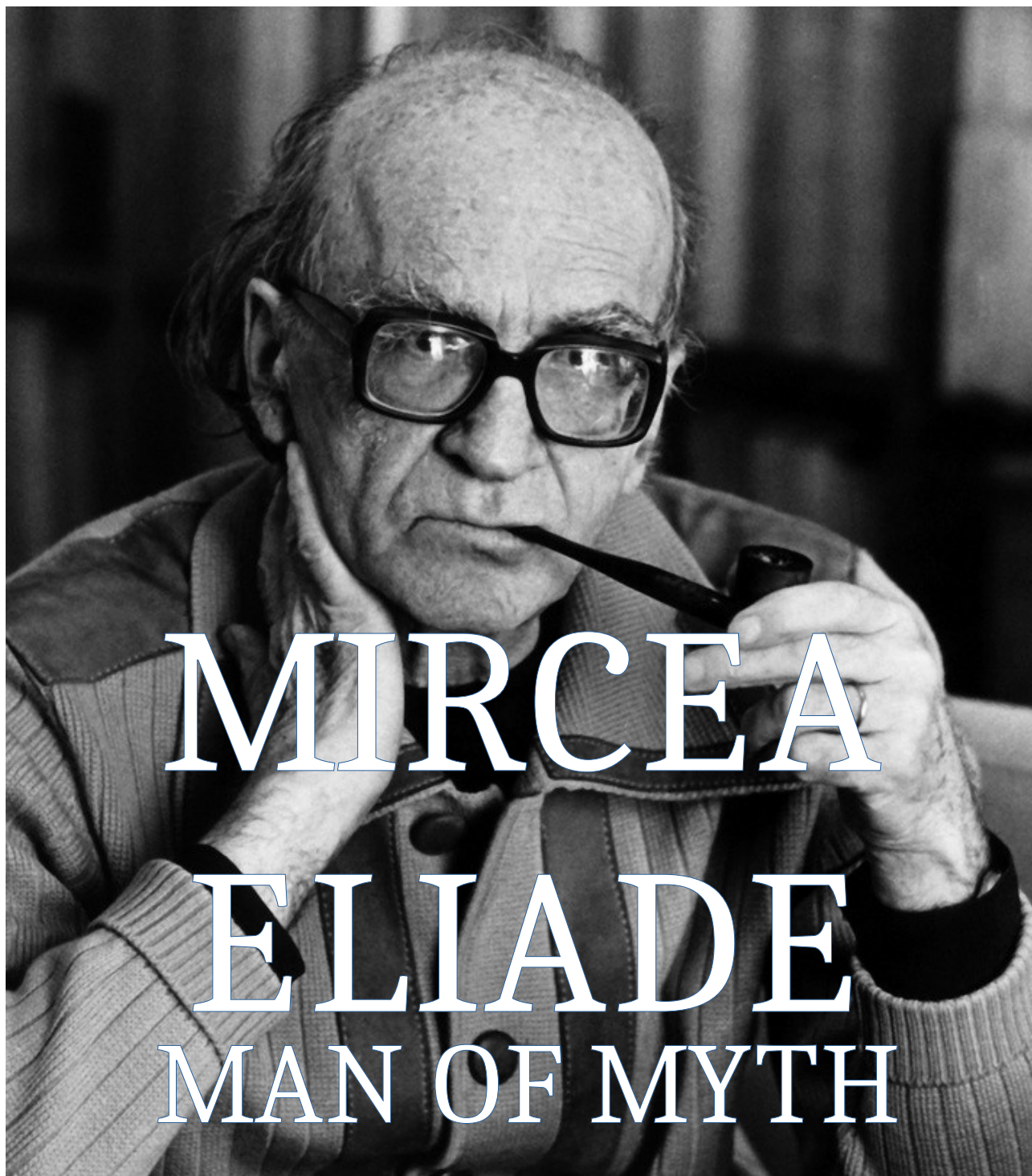




*MYTHOLOGOS  
NEWSLETTER  
VOLUME ONE  
ISSUE 3  
MAY 2021*



MIRCEA  
ELIADE  
MAN OF MYTH

# CARROT FIELD

VINCENT ASARO

*TRADE PAPERBACK,  
EBOOK, AUDIOBOOK:  
AMAZON.COM  
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CARROT FIELD:  
THE DISTANT LAND  
COMING DECEMBER 2021!

# EDITORIAL

## MAY 2021

Welcome to the third issue of the Mythologos Newsletter! This issues' motto is: *sero sed serio*, "Late but in earnest"! A lot of sweat went into creating this issue, I hope it is enjoyable and informative.

### Features:

**Mircea Eliade: Man Of Myth** The life and work of Eliade could fill volumes (and has), no article can do more than glide over the surface of the man's achievements and work. But for the uninitiated, this will serve as an introduction to one of the world's greatest mythographers.

**The Man Who Was Almost Bill Gates** The same might be said about Gary Kildall, one of the most important figures in the history of technology. Composing this article, I relied heavily on a 78-page extract from Gary's unpublished memoir *Computer Connections* (1994), which is available free for any who wish to read it, but with a certain proviso: *no direct quotation*. I would love to have included some passages in Gary's own words, but you can find the downloadable PDF easily, if you're interested; it's a good, short read filled with funny anecdotes and fascinating history, my personal favorite: why programming errors are called "bugs".

### Regular Columns:

*Unix Profiles* returns with a look at Ken Thompson!

*Errata* Updates on all my projects.

Let me know how you are enjoying the Newsletter ([carrotfieldchronicles@gmail.com](mailto:carrotfieldchronicles@gmail.com)) and if there are any mythological or Unixy subjects you would like to see covered. Until next time: *Good luck to you!*

- Ed.

## COMMUNIQUE

"I was wondering when the newsletter would come out (signed up after the first one), and it sure didn't disappoint. In fact, I'm very surprised at the quality and amount of content in this newsletter, I was expecting some news about Carrot Field 2 and Omniad now and then but this is a small *magazine*! Thank you for your commitment to quality in your content."

**E. Lopes, Subscriber**

"Love it! I read the whole thing... Most excellent."

**S. Hopwood, Subscriber**

*You're welcome! The Newsletter is a labor of love, I appreciate hearing back from subscribers. Don't hesitate to let me know what you like or don't like and what you want to see more of in these pages!*

- Ed.



A black and white photograph of Mircea Eliade. He is an older man with glasses, wearing a dark jacket over a white turtleneck. He is looking slightly to the right and has a pipe in his mouth. His hands are visible at the bottom, holding a small object.

MIRCEA ELIADE

MAN  
OF  
MYTH

## COSMOGONY

After the success of Star Wars in 1977, popular interest in mythology (or what people took to be mythology) reached an all time high, especially in the Western hemisphere, where cultural tradition and traditional religion was in steady decline; after the Second World War, industrial and technological secularism paved the way for the emergence of radical subcultures in the 1960's and indulgent hedonism in the 1970's. The West was ready to revisit the past, both as a refuge from modernism and (less happily) to help model the emerging corporate technocracy. What had for decades been a slowly expanding interest in fantasy, primarily in the world of science-fiction "fandom", now exploded into a full-blown phenomenon, on the backs of product such as the Dungeons & Dragons role-playing game, the novels of Terry Brooks and Stephen Donaldson, and the art of Frank Frazetta and the Brothers Hildebrandt.



I was born into that cultural landscape (circa 1973), and it no doubt influenced my extremely early interest in the subject of myth. Mythographer Joseph Campbell, quite late in his long career, was pushed forward both as guide through the land of myth and as New-Wave era self-help guru. All of that preamble is to tell you that I first became aware of Eliade through Campbell, although I have vague memories of seeing them both in a public television program about religion in 1980; myth was in the air, you just breathed it in. It wasn't until the mid-1980's that I came across *The Sacred and the Profane*, perhaps the most influential book on my own view of mythology. So, I have been walking with Eliade a long time. For those who have yet to explore his work, this short article can serve as an introduction.

## LIFE AND CAREER



Mircea Eliade was born in Bucharest Romania, March 9, 1907. The stamp of his homeland and the time he was born into would provide the backbone for his thought and philosophies for the rest of his life.

His parents, Gheorghe and Jeana, were deeply religious (Romanian Orthodox) but supportive of their son's wide ranging interests and pursuits. He had one sibling, a sister, Corina. His childhood was a happy one, even though it spanned the years of the First World War, and Eliade witnessed firsthand the destruction of Bucharest.

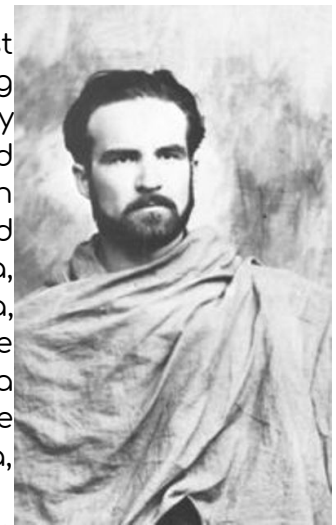
Early in life, Eliade determined to discover the origins of and connections between all religions. In the meantime, he led an unusually physical life for a child destined to be a scholar, taking a deep interest in the natural world, hiking, mountain climbing and boating, even joining the Romanian Boy Scouts.

Eliade's childhood was marked by an experience I believe is familiar to all sensitive and creative children, a moment of "epiphany": for Eliade, a fleeting moment, entering a room at just the right moment to catch a play of light that transformed

the mundane world into a "fairy" landscape. Eliade would spend the rest of his life seeking reentry into that glimpse of an enchanted and mysterious otherworld, and the experience would form the basis of his most influential concept, that of Sacred Time and Sacred Space. "I practiced for many years [the] exercise of recapturing that epiphanic moment, and I would always find again the same plenitude. I would slip into it as into a fragment of time devoid of duration—without beginning, middle, or end... But even though the beatitude was the same, it was now impossible to bear because it aggravated my sadness too much. By this time I knew the world to which the drawing room belonged ... *was a world forever lost.*"

Along with his interests in the outdoors and anthropology, the young Eliade also had literary ambitions. His literary interests motivated him to study English, Italian, Hebrew and even Persian in his spare time, with the help of private tutors. Eliade also became attracted to philosophy, pursuing it with the same seriousness and dedication he applied to all things. This was obviously an unusual young man, destined for great accomplishments.

Eliade finally left home in 1925 to attend Bucharest University, what followed was a whirlwind of activities, a dizzying odyssey of spiritual, creative and physical adventure. From Italy to India, Eliade sought out the writers, philosophers and scientists he most admired, augmenting his college studies with collaborations and explorations alongside his intellectual and spiritual mentors. In Calcutta, he studied Sanskrit and Yoga, becoming one of the first European Yoga experts. In Calcutta, Eliade also began his life's work in earnest, focusing on the origins and nature of religion. He met and befriended Mahatma Gandhi and absorbed the philosophy of Satyagraha, "peace force". Eliade received his PHD in 1933 with a thesis on Yoga, published as a book three years later.



*Eliade in India.*

These were also years of romantic and sexual exploration for Eliade, with many women passing through his life, until he met and married Nina Mareş, a divorced mother. Their life in Romania was soon disrupted by Eliade's thirst for knowledge and travel, taking them to England and Germany.

Eliade started contributing to various literary journals and writing in opposition to the Nazi Party. Eliade's own gravitation to right-wing political views would later lead to accusations of fascist convictions, which he always denied;



*Tim Roth as Dominic Matei in Youth Without Youth (2007), directed by Francis Ford Coppola*

Eliade's consistent sympathy for Jewish issues indicates that his right-wing conservatism was never fascist in nature. (Attacks upon his character and political history by communist activists in the 1980's no doubt contributed to his decline in health and death.) This early period of Eliade's career is well represented in his fantasy novella, *Youth Without Youth*, which was adapted into an excellent film by Francis Ford Coppola in 2007.

Almost coinciding perfectly with the end of the Second World War, Nina Eliade died of cancer and Romania



became a communist power. In the throes of deep depression, Eliade married Christinel Cotescu, took up the cause of anti-communism, and continued to work relentlessly, writing essays, articles, short stories, novels and plays, sometimes laboring close to twenty hours at a stretch without eating or resting

This long and chaotic era of Eliade's life finally came to a close in 1956, when Eliade relocated to Chicago, Illinois, where he had been invited by the religious scholar Joachim Wach at the University of Chicago, to deliver a series of lectures. Before the lectures could even be delivered, Wach passed away and Eliade was nominated to replace him.

This new life was to provide the platform and stability for Eliade to create his canon of great works in the fields of religious studies, cultural anthropology and mythography. Eliade would spend the rest of his life in the United States, rarely traveling abroad. He accrued awards and honors and became one of the most influential cultural theorists of the twentieth century. Mircea Eliade died April 22, 1986, aged 79, in Chicago.



*Eliade in America.*

## MAJOR WORKS

It would be beyond the scope of this article to provide even a cursory survey of Eliade's complete works. I have chosen six that I believe everyone interested in myth should read:

### 1. Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy

Mircea Eliade is almost single-handedly responsible for the popularization of shamanism, even the *word* was not well known or frequently used before the publication of this groundbreaking examination of primitive religion and ritual. Some of Eliade's ideas, such as a common origin for all shamanistic practices, have not stood the test of time, but this is still the best far-ranging study of shamanism in print and a great introduction to the subject.

### 2. Cosmos And History, Myth Of The Eternal Return

In this pivotal volume, Eliade lays out his theory of time, as it is experienced by the individual: cyclical and unending. These concepts would inform his central thesis, that of Sacred Time and Sacred Space. Most of my views on cultural transmission and myth were shaped by this book. Eliade presents a cogent interpretation of how sacred narrative and ritual provide humankind with a means to bring interior order to the experience of living in a chaotic world, in effect regenerating the world by sacralizing it. This is the central premise of *Omniad*, a project I have been at work on for a long time (see the Errata section of the Newsletter for more details).

### 3. The Sacred and the Profane

The most popular and well-known of Eliade's books, it influenced everyone from Carl Jung to Joseph Campbell and Jordan Peterson. Here Eliade presents his concept of archetypes, as thought-"fossils" containing the encrypted data of the history of human consciousness, as well as his theory of how modal states of consciousness

transform experience and environment from the mundane or "profane" into transcendent states of consciousness and sacred spaces, freed from the constraints of corporeality and historical time, harking back to his boyhood epiphany.

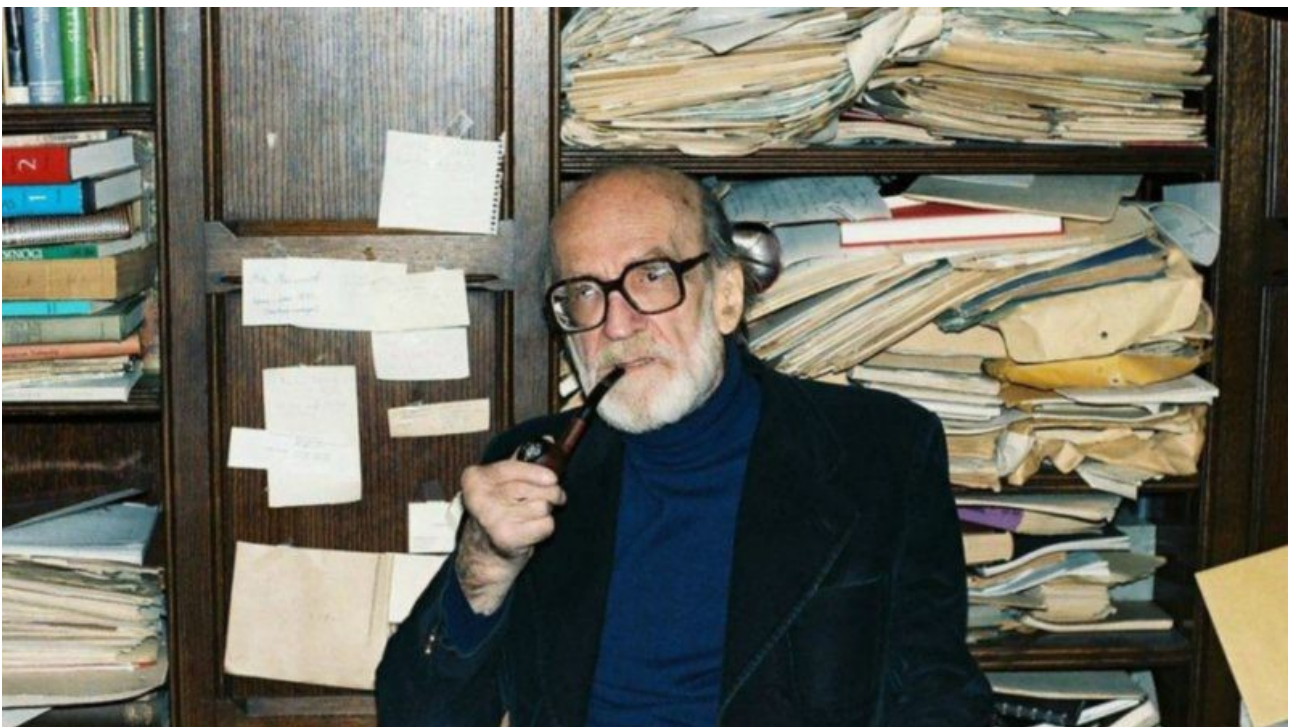
#### 4. The History of Religious Ideas

In these three volumes, Eliade records the speculative deep-time origins of religion and ritual and their known historical morphology. All of his theories come into play, as he weaves an ever-expanding tapestry of bewildering complexity and depth. In my opinion, this trilogy has never been surpassed; parts of it might be outdated or misguided, but his thoughts still possess rare potency and penetrating insight. I cut my teeth on these volumes and I still refer to them frequently.

### ETERNAL RETURN

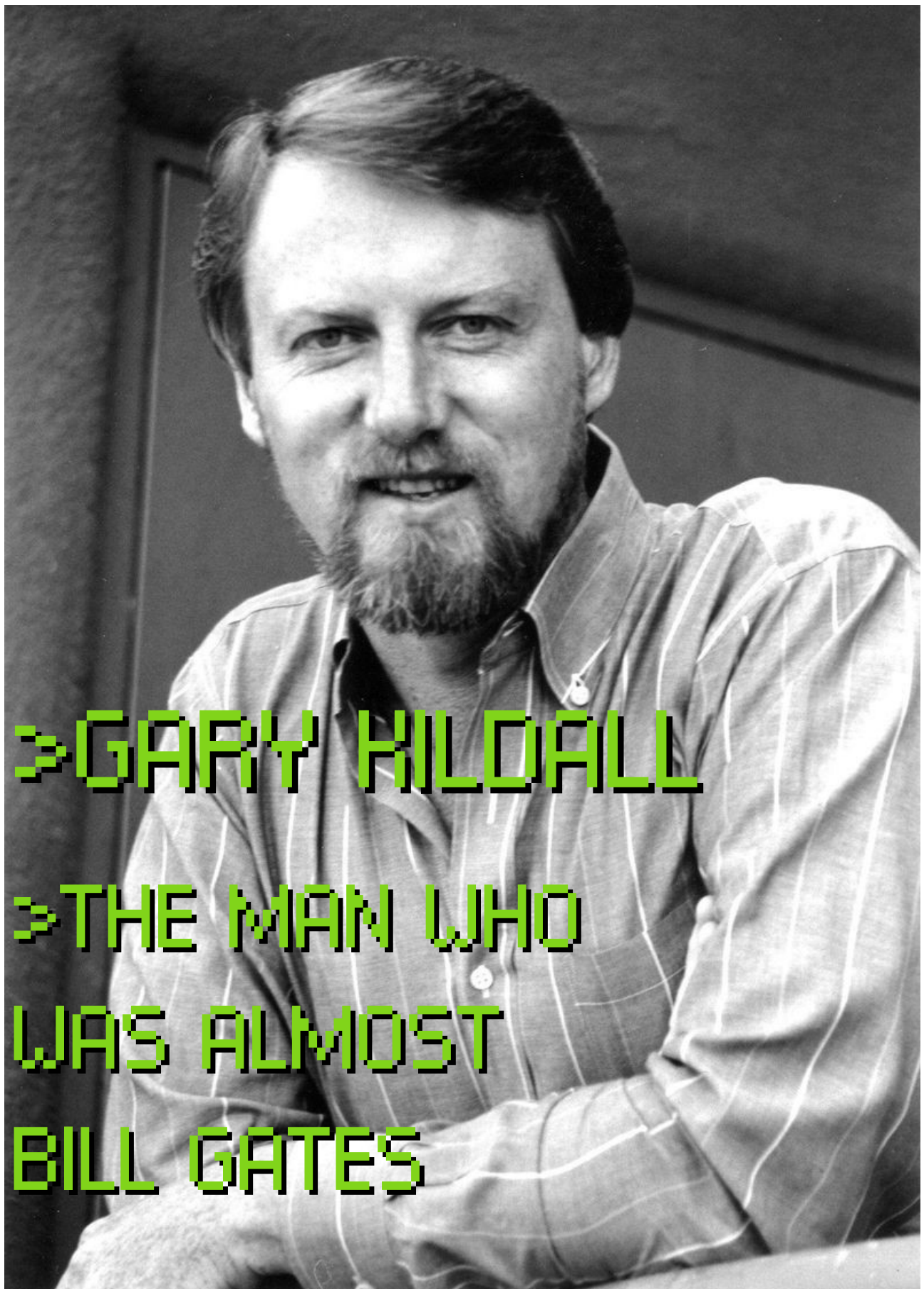
Like all truly brilliant thinkers, Eliade remains an influential and controversial figure. His influence is felt more through devotees like Jordan Peterson and Joseph Campbell, but it is well worth the effort to read his own words, so painstakingly set down over the course of his life. We are living in a time of cultural dissolution: everything is relative and reality has become *virtual reality*. Traditions are being abandoned in favor of vapid novelty, and identity is infinitely mutable. The individual is no longer seen as Promethean or heroic, but as an obstacle in the way of collective hegemony, the rise of the mono-thought/uni-mind society. We have never needed Eliade more, he speaks to us from the illuminated world of inspiration, carrying the light of accumulated human experience into the darkness of ignorance and the void of directionless "progress".

- Ed.



*Mircea Eliade, at the end of his life, prepared for the "eternal return".*





➤ GARY HILDALL

➤ THE MAN WHO  
WAS ALMOST  
BILL GATES

## >THE LEGEND

It is a day that has "lived in infamy" - in the computer world, anyway: the day IBM, "Big Blue", the totalitarian menace of Steve Jobs' "1984" Macintosh commercial, the venerable of the venerable, the high muckety-mucks of Forbin Project-like mainframe technology, came to knock on the door of indie tech rebel Gary Kildall's humble home - and he wasn't even there! He wasn't even *on earth*, but piloting a plane. He could have been rich, he could have been famous, he could have been... *Bill Gates*! If only he'd been home when IBM came knocking.

That's the legend, anyway. Like most urban legends there is a kernel of truth buried inside it. But to understand the story of Gary Kildall, we have to go back to the beginning, not only of his life, but also the beginning of the microcomputer revolution.

## >BEGINNINGS

Gary's childhood seems like something out of Rudyard Kipling or Jack London. His grandfather, Harold, was a seaman, shipping lumber out of Portland, Oregon all the way to Singapore. Harold Kildall would regale Gary with colorful stories of his maritime adventures. Harold retired from the sea in 1927, probably to save his marriage, and established a school of navigation. Kildall's Nautical School was successful and a popular local institution, and was generally known by the more humorous name of "Kildall's College of Nautical Knowledge". By the time Harold retired, at the age of 92, the school had educated 30,000 students, one of whom was Gary. Gary's father, Joe, followed in Harold's footsteps, eventually attaining the highest license in merchant shipping, Ocean Master, and during WWII, Joe became an instructor at the Nautical School. By that time, the school had attained elite status and both the Coast Guard and U.S. Navy were reliant on it as a source for technically skilled and able seamen.

Harold, Joe and Gary were a tightly-knit trio, and Gary was expected to follow in the family tradition. He received an advanced education in mathematics and the arcana of navigation at an early age. At first, young Gary embraced the program, seeking

out historical texts on navigation and taking the tests meant for graduating students.

This rigorous training and self education no doubt contributed to Gary's preternatural skills as a software engineer, but the almost secret world of the Kildall men would clearly limit Gary's ability in adult life to realistically gauge the trustworthiness of others. His unpublished autobiography, *Computer Connections*, is rife with stories of Gary's encounters with aggressively ambitious people, like Bill Gates, who had managed to gain entry to opportunities and positions they were clearly not yet qualified for. Gary would inevitably shrug these instances off as no matter, even in the face of warnings from friends: in every instance, dealing with such people, Gary would be ripped-off and betrayed in the future. It would be a long time before Gary learned that the "industry" was not a meritocracy like the Nautical School, but more on that later.

## >THE COMPUTER KID



Gary was fully expected to become an instructor at the Nautical School, and he was already teaching classes there while attending high school, but he bucked family tradition by setting his sites on a college degree. There was only one problem, the demands of teaching nautical courses left him little time for homework and his grades were terrible. Showing what would be a lifelong knack for creating opportunities for himself based on his unusual accomplishments, he wrote directly to the University of Washington in Portland, explaining the situation and requesting to be accepted based on his experience as an instructor at the nautical school. This actually worked and Gary was on his way to making his own life. He intended on becoming a high school teacher but history had other plans for him.

At University, Gary's math studies, which included advanced navigation, brought him into contact with numerous, archaic, mechanical computation machines. Gary didn't like them at all and



wondered if there was an easier and more efficient method of automated computation than lining up rows of noisy machines spitting out ticker-tape equations that were frequently inaccurate, unreadable or out of sync with each other. One day, a friend showed up, after another frustrating session wrangling antediluvian computation machines; he flashed a computer punch-card and said, "This is the next Big Thing." Gary's life would never be the same.

Gary fell head first into the rabbit hole. He started taking computer science classes and was soon immersed in the lifestyle of a computer enthusiast in the 1960's: learning machine assembly language, competing for time with the machine (IBM 7094) with students, faculty and visitors, and learning how to scam

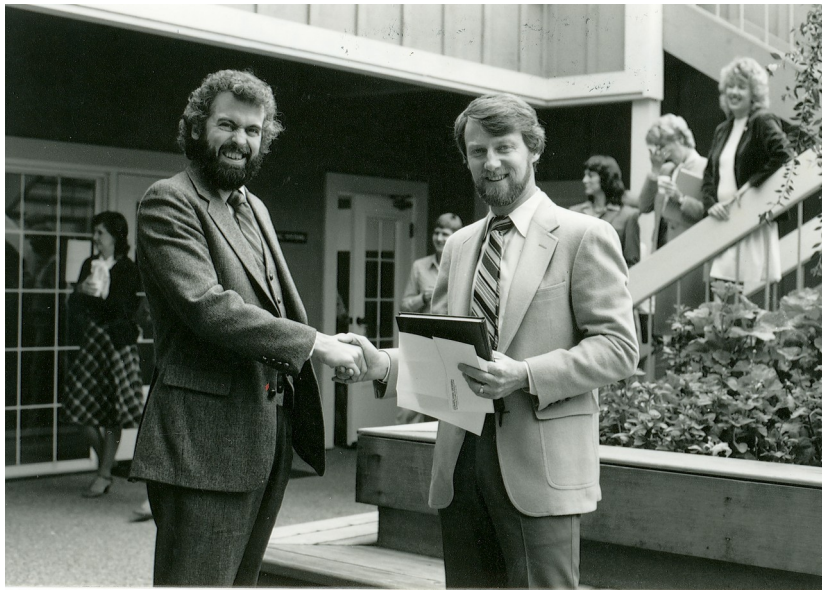


alone-time with the computer: Gary's favorite ploy was to hang a sign reading "Under Repair - Come Back In One Hour", which usually did the trick. The limitations of the IBM 7094 and later the Burroughs B5500 impressed on Gary the need for efficient compilers, a program that translates computer languages like FORTRAN and ALGOL (or Java and Python, today) into binary messages computer hardware can understand. This would eventually lead Gary to create some of the most important software ever written, and which is still with us today.

## >NAVY & BUSINESS

Gary's education was interrupted in 1967 by a call from Uncle Sam. He was drafted into the Navy, during the Vietnam War, but given his experience, education, and knowledge, his father was able to leverage influence with the Navy to keep Gary off the battlefield; instead, Gary was allowed to continue his education. He graduated with a Master's Degree in 1969, continued his studies

at the Navy Postgraduate School, and bounced back to the University of Washington, where he attained his Doctorate in computer science in 1972 (his thesis would form the basis of his first commercial successes in technology). By this point, Gary was far ahead of the civilian sector in terms of computer theory, knowledge and experience. New processing chips, smaller and faster than anything that had come before, were hitting the market. The micro-computer revolution was just around the corner.



Gary's accomplishments as an engineer and entrepreneur accumulated fast. Working from early Intel processors, he set up a "home" computer in his apartment, but to make it a "real" computer, he needed a disk-drive. Mainframe disks were huge, but he learned of a few experimental older models that were relatively small and bartered for one; unfortunately, it was incompatible with his Intel processor and was basically useless. With the help of a friend, working in shifts whenever possible, Gary turned his doctoral thesis into a working system to control the disk-drive. The program was called CP/M, Control Program/Monitor (later, Control Program for Microcomputers), which would become the basis for DOS. Realizing that he had solved a major technical problem facing the emerging computer industry, Gary formed a company, Intergalactic Digital Research, later shortened to Digital Research, Inc.

Gary steadily built a reputation for himself as a reliable programmer, honest businessman, and innovative engineer. Quick: what's the name of the program that launches the program that launches your operating system, desktop and applications? That's

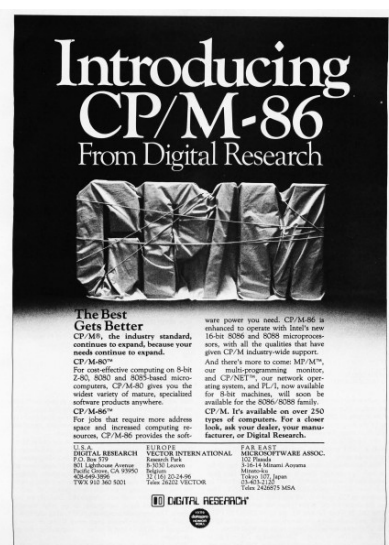
the BIOS (Basic Input/Output System)! Gary Kildall *created* BIOS. He went on solving many other baseline problems that stood between the average person and a home-computer, and most of his solutions are still with us today (the mark of great engineering). But it wasn't all microchips and computer code, during this period Gary met and married Dorothy McEwen, who also became his business partner; according to all accounts, they were a great couple and an unbeatable business partnership.

## >THE DEVIL WEARS IZOD

The thing to keep in mind about the "Gary Kildall/IBM" story is its one and only source: Bill Gates. The same person who became the richest man on earth on the back of that incident is also the author of the widely-circulated story. It goes something like this:

DRI was on a winning streak through the remainder of the 1970's, an industry leader, operating out of a Victorian house with a small, family-like staff. Gary had helped the home-computer become a reality, although few outside of the industry were aware of his valuable contributions. Come the year 1980, IBM was (finally) ready to dive into the micro-computer craze. The "holy trinity" of the Apple II, TRS-80 and Commodore PET dominated the market. IBM had little chance of catching up due to their ploddingly thorough R&D process; when the question was asked, how long would it take IBM engineers to design a home computer, one engineer allegedly answered, "Not less than ten years." They needed a micro and they needed it yesterday. What if they repackaged existing components and slapped a passable operating system on it, bundled with attractive casings and peripherals?

This plan of action was agreed upon. But operating systems don't grow on trees, where could they get one fast and cheap? Enter Bill Gates and the fledgling MicroSoft. Bill suggested CP/M as the solution. He called Gary and told him that "some people" would come to visit him the next day and to "treat them right."



CP/M ad that appeared in Byte Magazine.



Come the next day, Gary was piloting a plane with a business partner to hand deliver some DRI software. IBM came calling, and with Gary absent, decided they didn't want to waste time on DRI and rescinded their offer. IBM asked Bill if he could come up with something as good as CP/M and Bill delivered DOS. The only challenge Gary ever made to the Gates narrative was that he returned home early in the day and found the IBM reps pressuring Dorothy into signing a Non-Disclosure-Agreement, without which no deal would be made; Gary talked them off the ledge but when they finally made their offer it was so low that he rejected it.

The Gates version is the one that has been repeated most often. It seems a timeless parable about personal responsibility. Gary could have had it all, if only he'd followed Bill's instructions, if only he'd *been there*. We'll never know what really happened, what we do know is that DOS was originally Q-DOS, "Quick & Dirty Operating System" and it is nothing more than CP/M rewritten hastily in BASIC. Gary takes a few swipes at Bill Gates in *Computer Connections*, but never delivers the death-blow; he was too nice of a guy to do that, but he makes it clear that he considered Gates to be more businessman than engineer. IBM soon overtook all of its competitors and ruled the market for the next fifteen years, and made Bill Gates fabulously wealthy and powerful. IBM and MicroSoft later buried the story once and for all by purchasing and releasing CP/M, but priced so ridiculously high that few were tempted to try it; this strategy became a routine way for MicroSoft to deal with competition.



Right: Gary and Dorothy.



Bottom: Gary with his kids.

## >SHAKESPEAREAN ENDING

Gary went on creating great software (check out his innovative **Logo** project) but most now know him thanks to the internet: starting in 1983, Gary co-hosted a public television tech-news and review program, *The Computer Chronicles*. Gary was co-host and technical consultant; he had an engaging, laid-back screen presence and a talent for making technology understandable to the average person. He appeared on the program for seven years and never received payment, he did it because he loved computer science and wanted to educate the public. You can find most of the episodes on Archive.org, and the first three seasons are available on Odysee.com.



*Gary co-hosting The Computer Chronicles.*

The events surrounding Gary's death, in 1994, at the age of 52, are unclear. There are rumors that his loss to Bill Gates caused him to start drinking and vague stories that he met his death at a "biker bar". I have not been able to confirm or source those rumors. In reality, it was three days after the initial incident before Gary died and the first diagnosis was "heart attack". The truth will have to remain a mystery.

## >LOGOFF . . . .

What to make of the Gary Kildall story? Before I started using a Unix-based system, my interest in technology was pretty much nil. So, I'm not deeply versed in the "inside baseball" of Silicon Valley. But I can't help but be reminded of the great paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould.

Stephen Gould was, for about thirty years, the most popular figure in the field of evolutionary theory. Thanks to his award-winning essays published in *Natural History Magazine* and habitual appearances in public television programs, he was almost a

household name, even garnering a cameo on *The Simpsons* (when it was still funny). But Gould was always a controversial figure, a proponent of free thinking who criticized the arrogance and myopia of institutionalized science, a Darwinian populist: in brief, the establishment hated him. When Gould died in 2002, there was a smattering of respectful obituaries, but within weeks, his many enemies took to the letters columns of major newspapers and magazines and the internet to make sure everyone knew that Gould was "problematic": not anti-religious enough for the "New Atheists", not rigorous enough for the rising generation of high volume data-crunching scientists, not socialist enough for the radical Marxists, and so on.

By the time his posthumous Magnum Opus, *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory* was published, the stage was set for the death stroke. Lukewarm and negative reviews appeared in droves, in echo-chamber fashion branding the book as "indulgent", "unreadable" and in need of an editor (it isn't - I would go so far as to say it is the most important work in the field since Charles Darwin's *Descent of Man*, 1875). Gould's reputation had been effectively *contained*, one had to pass through the gauntlet of the elite gatekeepers to access his work, and your opinion would be filtered through theirs. *Fiat!*



Has Gary Kildall been subjected to the same treatment? I think so. One only has to think of what the world of technology would be like if Unix and CP/M had triumphed over Microsoft and Apple. It's not the code that poses a threat to the gatekeepers, it's the philosophy, technology for the User, instead of technology *using us*. I've been researching Unix history for a year now, and you'd be surprised to see that the ubiquitous question "Is Unix Dead?" was

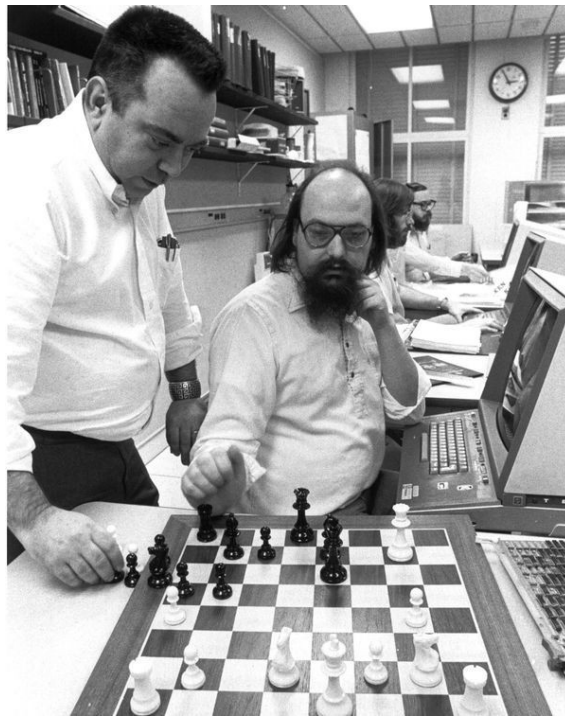


already in circulation *before* 1980! Unix still isn't dead, but I think some people have long wished it was.

Reading Gary's own words in *Computer Connections*, it's easy enough to figure out why he didn't fit in with the corporate Silicon Valley that was being born at the time. He was not a gatekeeper. He believed in the freedom of the User. Like Gould, his reputation has been quite effectively *contained*. From what I've seen online, the general consensus on his career is: Sure, Gary was bright (so were many other people!), but he was irresponsible and didn't he die a drunk in a biker-bar brawl? Sad story, but tech's gotta keep moving forward. All respects, really, here's a toast to all those old dudes. I'll even post a Tweet on his birthday with a link to a *Wired* article, to show how much I really care.

- Ed.

# UNIX PROFILES: 0002 KEN THOMPSON



*Ken Thompson (seated) working on a chess program.*

+ Kenneth Lane Thompson was born February 4, 1943 in New Orleans, Louisiana. His father was in the US Navy. Ken was what is known as an "Army Brat", meaning that his family moved frequently, depending on his father's duties.

+ Ken was always interested in logic and took an early interest in math and mathematical science.

+ Ken received a Bachelor of Science degree in 1965 followed by a Master's degree in 1966, in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from the University of California, Berkeley. Electrical Engineering is one of the most demanding sciences, with a high drop-out rate from courses and careers, attaining a Master's in the subject is, in itself, a high achievement.

+ After graduation, Ken joined the Bell Laboratories Computing Sciences Research Center, in Murray Hill NJ, at the same time as Dennis Ritchie (see Mythologos Volume I, Issue 02 for Dennis Ritchie's profile. -Ed). Ken was also just in time to participate in the development of the time-sharing system for the Multics computer. Bell

Labs dropped the Multics project in 1969. The Computing Sciences Research group members looked for a new project with similar possibilities, and gradually formed what would become the Unix Philosophy.

+ Seeking to solve several networking and programming problems, Ken wrote the first version of Unix (a play on Multics: instead of a multi-user, time-sharing system, Unix would be tailored for single-user interface with the ultimate goal of multi-tasking instead of time-sharing). He wrote the entire system, which included a language ("B"), an interpreter (which allows a program to run without having been compiled), a command-line "shell", and a text editor (among other features) in one month! Unix was originally designed for the then-new PDP-7 machine, but the in-built "portability" of Unix would make it possible to use the system on any architecture, leading to the inevitable proliferation of Unix "distributions": Linux is essentially as Unix distribution.

+ Accomplishments:

- UTF-8 multi-byte character encoding scheme. What a mouthful! Look UTF-8 up, you don't realize it, but without it you wouldn't be able to do much with a computer!
- **Plan9** and **Inferno** OS-development environments. These frameworks are hard to access, but from my research, I can say that both projects were highly influential on OS's, particularly in the 21st century, with neither project ever receiving credit.
- Ken Thompson was pivotal in the development of Chess programming. His adventures in the world of chess tournaments took him all around the world, and for a time, his IBM chess program was the unchallenged world champion! Several books have been written on this subject.
- Contributed to Go (or GoLang), a language similar to C but with features like garbage-collection and simpler syntax.

+ Ken Thompson retired from Bell Labs in 2000 and is now a consultant for Google, holding the title of Distinguished Engineer. Ken has received many honors and awards, including the Turing Award, in 1983.

## QUOTES

"One of my most productive days was *throwing away* 1,000 lines of code."

"You can't trust code that you did not totally create yourself."

"I think the major good idea in Unix was its clean and simple interface: open, close, read, and write."

"I view Linux as something that's not Microsoft - a backlash against Microsoft, no more and no less."

"FORTRAN was the language of choice for the same reason that three-legged races are popular."

"I am a very bottom-up thinker."



# ERRATA

CARROT FIELD SEQUEL UPDATE: Officially titled “The Distant Land”, Carrot Field 2 is moving along at a good clip. Since switching to EXWM (Emacs Window-manager), productivity has increased significantly. I can’t imagine a better writing environment! Everything is still on track for a December 2021 publication! It is, in all ways, a bigger, better, even *more* epic novel than the original!

OMNIAD UPDATE: Preparation for this behemoth, 15-Volume novel is going well. I am outlining the whole first volume, which I had not planned on, but which is going well. The hardest part of the preparation is getting the Holistic Index ready for use. The Holistic Index is to help me access the hundreds of documents produced over the past thirty-odd years for Omniad! I am using Emacs as the UI and various Unix utils, like *find*, *grep* & *sed*, to navigate, manage and edit the Index. I have decided that each year I will give the Index an edition number, kind of like a reference book (dictionary, thesaurus etc.), and its own name. The First Edition goes by the name of “Gilgamesh”, since it will always be the oldest and most primitive version of the Index!

That’s all for now. I am already working on Issue #4 of the Newsletter, and of course, plenty of new Free Software Report and Mythologos content, so stay tuned!

- Ed.

